

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9861

INFO AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, EGEN, PK

SUBJ: ISLAMIC ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL COMMISSION MEETING

REF: (A) KARACHI 518 (NOTAL), (B) STATE 28105 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: THE ISLAMIC COMMISSION ON ECONOMIC, CULTURAL AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS MET IN KARACHI FROM FEBRUARY 25-28. MEETING WAS ATTENDED BY EIGHTEEN MEMBER COUNTRY DELEGATIONS AND FIVE OBSERVERS FROM ALL OVER THE MUSLIM WORLD. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS REPORTS ABOUT THE MEETING, THE MAIN FOCUS WAS ON VARIOUS MEASURES FOR PROMOTING THE SOLIDARITY OF THE MUSLIM WORLD IN THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AREAS. MFA SOURCES SUGGEST THAT ANOTHER IMPORTANT PURPOSE WAS TO IMPRESS THE OPEC PARTICIPANTS WITH THE EFFECTS OF OIL PRICES ON THE NON-OIL LDCS. PAKISTAN'S EFFORTS TO USE THE COMMISSION TO PUSH FOR THE THIRD WORLD SUMMIT SEEMS NOT TO HAVE HAD MUCH SUCCESS. END SUMMARY.

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2. THE COMMISSION SUPPORTED A NUMBER OF SPECIFIC PROPOSALS FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COOPERATION AMONG ISLAMIC COUNTRIES. ACCORDING TO PUBLISHED REPORTS, THESE INCLUDED EFFORTS AT BETTER COORDINATION OF FINANCIAL AND MONETARY POLICIES, A MEETING OF THE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY OF MUSLIM COUNTRIES TO PROMOTE TRADE AMONG THESE COUNTRIES, AND GENERALIZED EXHORTATION TO INCREASE INVESTMENT TIES AMONG THE

ISLAMIC COUNTRIES. THE COMMISSION AGREED TO LAUNCH AN ELABORATE PROGRAM FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ISLAMIC SCIENCE FOUNDATION, EXTENSION OF TECHNICAL PERSONNEL AND INITIATION OF JOINT INDUSTRIAL VENTURES, SO AS TO "ENSURE OPTIMUM UTILIZATION OF RESOURCES FOR THE MUTUAL BENEFIT OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD." THE COMMISSION ALSO AGREED - APPARENTLY AT PAKISTAN'S SUGGESTION - THAT THE ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO PROVIDE BALANCE OF PAYMENTS SUPPORT TO THE SMALLER, LEAST DEVELOPED MUSLIM COUNTRIES.

3. PRESS REPORTS ON THE COMMISSION ALSO STATED THAT THE COMMISSION HAD "EXTENDED GENERAL SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE" TO BHUTTO'S PROPOSAL FOR A THIRD WORLD SUMMIT AND HAD AGREED TO PRESENT IT TO THE GOVERNMENTS OF MEMBER STATES FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION. CONSIDERING THE EFFORT PAKISTAN HAS PUT INTO DRUMMING UP SUPPORT BW THE SUMMIT, THIS WAS PROBABLY THE LEAST THAT AN ISLAMIC GROUP MEETING IN PAKISTAN COULD GET AWAY WITH. HOWEVER, IT IS CERTAINLY A DISAPPOINTMENT TO THE GOP THAT A MORE DEFINITIVE ENDORSEMENT WAS NOT FORTHCOMING.

4. THE PRESS REPORTS SUMMARIZING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE CONFERENCE ALSO MENTIONED THAT THE COMMISSION HAD RECOMMENDED TRADE MEASURES INCLUDING PREFERENTIAL TRADING AGREEMENTS. ACCORDING TO MFA DIRECTOR (UN), MUNIR AKRAM, WHO ATTENDED THE CONFERENCE AND DID MUCH OF THE PREPARATORY WORK FOR THE GOP SIDE, THE COMMISSION IN FACT CONCLUDED THAT PREFERENTIAL TRADING AGREEMENTS WOULD NOT PROVIDE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MUCH BENEFIT, SINCE SEVERAL OF THE KEY MARKETS, ESPECIALLY IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA, WERE ALREADY VERY OPEN ONES. AKRAM FELT THAT THE IMPORTANT THING TO LOOK FOR THE THE TRADE FIELD WAS LONG-TERM SUPPLY AND PURCHASE AGREEMENTS AMONG THE ISLAMIC COUNTRIES.

5. IN DISCUSSING THE CONFERENCE, AKRAM ALSO MENTIONED TWO SIGNIFICANT FEATURES WHICH DID NOT APPEAR IN THE PRESS. FIRST, HE SAID THAT PAKISTAN HAD PREPARED AND PRESENTED TO THE CONFERENCE A PAPER ON OIL PRICES AND THEIR EFFECT ON DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. THE DISCUSSION OF THIS TOPIC IN THE COMMISSION WAS "FULL AND FRANK", HE SAID, AND THE PARTICIPANTS HAD "AGREED TO DISAGREE." WE FIND IT ASTONISHING THAT SUCH A PAPER WAS PRESENTED AT ALL.

6. SECOND, AND MORE GENERALLY, AKRAM PRESENTED THE CONFERENCE AS PART OF A GENERALIZED EFFORT TO IMPROVE COORDINATION AMONG LDCS AND PREPARE THE GROUND WORK FOR A THIRD WORLD SUMMIT. HE HAS IN THE PAST INDICATED TO US THAT THE SUMMIT

WAS IN PART DESIGNED TO IMPRESS ON THE OIL-RICH COUNTRIES THE URGENCY OF THE PLIGHT OF THE NONOIL DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. AS HE EXPLAINED IT, THIS WAS VERY MUCH A FEATURE OF THE ISLAMIC ECONOMIC COMMISSION AS WELL. HE FELT IN THIS REGARD THAT THE DISCUSSION HAD BEEN "USEFUL."

7. WE ARE INCLINED TO WONDER WHETHER THE DIALOGUE ON OIL PRICES AND ON THE PLIGHT OF THE POORER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WAS AS SHARP AS AKRAM WOULD HAVE US BELIEVE. IT IS CERTAIN, HOWEVER, THAT PAKISTAN IS VERY MUCH INTERESTED IN IMPRESSING THE OPEC COUNTRIES ON BOTH COUNTS.

8. EMBASSY REGRETS DELAY IN REPORTING ON COMMISSION. MAIN REASON WAS ADVANCED EXTENDED ABSENCE FROM ISLAMABAD OF MUNIR AKRAM, WHOSE BRAIN WE FELT WE HAD TO PICK. CONGEN KARACHI HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THIS MESSAGE.

BYROADE

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